

Second Poetry

of the

Early Christians

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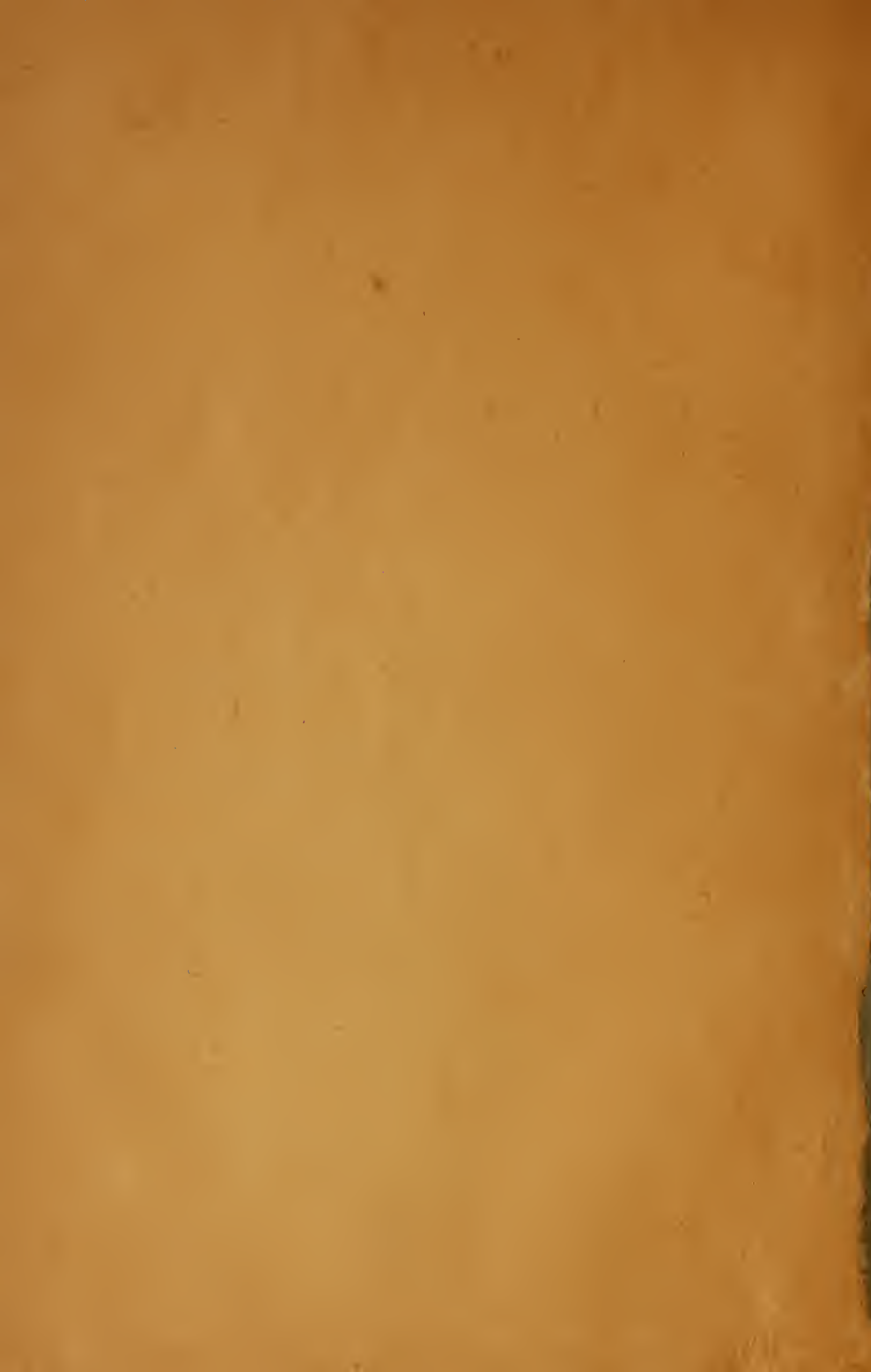
Sacred Poetry  
of the  
Early Christians

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THE SACRED POETRY

**OF THE EARLY CHRISTIANS.**

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POETRY and music are intimately related, and are both natural expressions of human thought and feeling. The first efforts of rude nations towards the creation of a literature are poetical in their character. The talk of the Indian orator only requires rhythmical measurement to transform it into poetry, occasionally rising into strains of genuine sublimity. No nation was ever found without its appropriate popular songs and music, rude or refined, according to the degree of intelligence and cultivation attained; and perhaps a more powerful engine has never been employed to control the feelings and energies of a people. Hence the patriot and the demagogue have alike exhibited the attractions of their country or faction, in the stanzas of a popular song, and taught the people to sing it in the streets and by the fireside. The followers of the Lamb, and the advocates of error, have always been accustomed to condense the spirit of their sentiments into psalms and hymns, and enjoin upon their disciples to sing them unceasingly in the public convocation, and in the private hours of devotion. The strains of the poetry when invested with the colouring of genius, and the tones of the music when judiciously adapted, always touch a chord, which vibrates to the soul of sensibility. There is a fascination about a well performed piece of music, which even a barbarian will feel; and there are strains of Christian psalmody, which possess power to charm the cold ear of in-

fidelity itself. In most consummate wisdom, therefore, did he, who established the religion of the Gospel, ordain poetry and music as an essential part of its services. Well he knew what was in man, and what was best adapted to make its way to the heart of man, which, like a hostile citadel, is barricaded against all more direct and less attractive modes of address.

From the Jewish synagogue, sacred music very naturally passed over into the Christian sanctuary. Our blessed Lord himself, on that memorable night, when he instituted the Sacramental memorial of his dying love, furnished the transition act by concluding the solemnity with a hymn. As the first Christians were drawn from the synagogue, they naturally brought with them those songs of Zion, which were associated with all their earliest recollections, and best feelings, and appropriated them to the services of the new dispensation; at least so far as they deemed them applicable to the circumstances and the wants of Christian worshippers. But to what extent the biblical psalms were adopted in the Christian Church, and what transformations they underwent in the hands of apostles, or of Christian poets in apostolic times, we have no information. At a later period we find them in general use in the Churches, and esteemed by the fathers the most inestimable portion of their religious services. The apostolical canons contain this injunction: "Let another sing the hymns of David, and let the people repeat the concluding lines."\* "The presiding priest," says Dionysius Areop. "begins the sacred melody of the psalms, the whole ecclesi-

\* "Ἐτερος τις (sc. ἀναγνώσκων) τοὺς τοῦ Δαβιδ ἑκατάστων ὕμνων, καὶ ὁ λαὸς τὰ ἀκροστίχια ὑποψαλλέτω. "Not merely the singing of the psalms is here intended, but also the repetition of the concluding words, (τὰ ἀκροστίχια, i. e. extrema versuum, and not as the old Latin translation falsely renders it, initia versuum.") *Augusti, Denkwürdigkeiten aus der christlichen Archäologie. Bd. I. p. 236.*

astical choir accompanying him in the holy psalmody.”\* No other testimony is required to prove, that the Book of Psalms was early used in the Christian Church, and a single extract will suffice to show the estimation in which it was held. “In the perusal of other books,” says Athanasius, “we generally think of the persons of whom they treat, we admire them, and even set them before us for imitation; but in the psalms, every one imagines he reads his own thoughts and emotions, and he is as much affected by them as if they were his own. I believe also, that a man can find nothing more glorious than these psalms; for they embrace the whole life of man, the affections of his mind, and the emotions of his soul. Whether he seeks repentance and conversion, or suffers in tribulation and temptation, or is undergoing persecution, or has escaped from some ambush, or is filled with sorrow and inquietude, or has experienced any similar affliction, or if he discovers that he grows in holiness, or desires to praise and glorify God, he can select a psalm suited to every occasion, and thus will find that they are written for him.” We can hardly conceive it possible that the psalms of David could have been so generally adopted in the Churches, and so highly esteemed by the best of the fathers, unless they had been introduced or sanctioned by the apostles, and inspired teachers.

We have reason to suppose however, that they were not exclusively used, at least, in the Gentile Churches; for the apostle distinctly mentions *psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs*, as known and used among them. Whatever may be the precise meaning of these several terms, or the definite character of the several classes of sacred lyrics indicated by them, it seems hardly probable, that so many appellations

\* ὁ ἱεράρχης ἀπάρχεται τῆς ἱεραῖς τῶν ψαλμῶν μελωδίας, συναδούσης αὐτῷ τὴν ψαλμικὴν ἱερολογίαν ἀπάσης τῆς ἐκκλησιαστικῆς διακοσμήσεως. *De Hierarch. Eccl. c. 3.*

would be applied to the Psalms of David, however they might be classified and arranged in the Christian psalm-book. Jerome, it is true, explains them all of different classes of poems in the psalter; calling those pieces *psalms*, which pertain to some moral theme, (ad ethicum locum pertinent,)—those *hymns*, which exhibit the power and majesty of God, and his works of wonder and grace, to which *hallelujah* is prefixed or appended,—and *spiritual songs* are those which treat of superior beings and the harmony of the universe. The same opinion substantially has been held also by some modern writers, who suppose the ψαλμοί to correspond with the תְּהִלִּים, the ὕμνοι with the מְזֻמְרִים, and the ᾠδαὶ πνεύματικαὶ with the שִׁירִים of the Old Testament psalmody. Another ancient explanation, equally probable and ingenious, may be given. “The *psalm*, properly speaking, is harmoniously sung with an instrumental accompaniment, the psalter: the *ode* is a musical and harmonious piece, intended only for the voice; and the *hymn* is an elaborate doxology, referring to the blessings we have experienced, or the evils we have committed.”\* Others have reduced the signification to two classes, embracing only psalms and hymns; while Le Clerc applies all the terms to one class. “*Malim ergo dicere, Paulum idem tribus verbis significasse.*”† Still it seems more correspondent to Scriptural usage to consider the term *psalms* here, as meaning the Book of Psalms, as used in Luke xxiv. 44, and equivalent to Βίβλος ψαλμῶν, Luke xx. 42. Acts i. 20, to which the New Testament writers so frequently refer for prophecies, proofs,

\* Ψαλμὸς μὲν κυρίως, ὁ μετὰ ὀργανικοῦ ψαλτηρίου ἐμμελῶς ἐκφωνούμενος· ὡδὴ δὲ φωνή τις μουσική τε καὶ ἐναρμόνιος, ἀπὸ μόνου στόματος· ὕμνος δὲ ἡ ἐπιτεταγμένη δοξολογία, ἢ καλῶν ὧν πεπόνθαμεν, ἢ κακῶν ὧν δεδράκαμεν. Euthymii Zigabeni Prefat. in Psalmos.

† Not. Ad. Hammondi N. T.



and illustrations of their facts and doctrines. The word hymn is only used in one other passage of the New Testament, in which it describes the act of devotion with which our blessed Lord closed the services of the Sacramental Supper. It is not known with certainty, but commonly supposed, that he used the Hallel, or great song of praise, usually chanted by the Jews at the close of the paschal service, embracing the six psalms from the 113th to the 118th. It may be proper to remark here, that in the original of this passage (Matt. xxvi. 30, and Mark xiv. 26,) not the substantive ὕμνος, but the participle of the correlative verb, ὑμνήσαντες is used.\* The verb is also used in Acts xvi. 25, but is equally indefinite, as it does not determine whether the language of these "praises" or devotions of the prisoners, was borrowed from the Scriptures, or from the compositions of their brethren, or was the effusion of their own minds, extemporaneous, or previously composed. In the absence of all positive testimony, we may conjecture, that the *hymns* spoken of were poetical versions, or illustrations of appropriate passages of Scripture; and the *spiritual songs*, religious odes composed by Christians expressive of the spiritual emotions and experience of believers. It cannot be deemed unreasonable to suppose, that even at this early age, as well as at later periods, men of education and

\* Augustin has preserved a fragment of ancient poetry, which he tells us the Priscillianists used, and held to be the hymn composed by our Lord on this occasion. As a curiosity, it may be worthy of a place here.

Solvere volo, et solvi volo.  
 Salvare volo, et salvari volo.  
 Generari volo,  
 Cantare volo.  
 Saltate cuncti!  
 Ornare volo et ornari volo.  
 Verbo illusi cuncta,  
 Et non sum illusus a toto.

genius, and piety, employed their talents in the composition of hymns and spiritual odes, which being approved by the apostles, were introduced into the services of the Church. It is not probable, however, that any were written under the influence of inspiration ; or they would have been preserved with other inspired writings.

That such Scriptural hymns were early composed and used by Christians, we have all the evidence, which specimens of undoubted antiquity, can afford. A morning hymn began with these words :

Δόξα ἐν ὑψίστοις θεῷ,	Glory in the highest to God.
καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς εἰρήνη,	And on earth peace,
ἐν ἀνθρώποις εὐδοκία.*	Among men goodwill.

In another part of the hymn the following lines occur :

ὁ ἀμνὸς τοῦ θεοῦ,	O Lamb of God,
ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ πατρὸς,	O Son of the Father,
ὁ αἴρων τὰς ἁμαρτίας τοῦ κόσμου,	Who bearest the sins of the world,
πρόσδεξαι τὴν δέησιν ἡμῶν.	Receive our prayer.

Several distinguished writers, as Heumann, Michaelis, Paulus, Reinhard, &c., have maintained, that Paul's Epistles contain quotations from hymns, in common use when the apostle wrote. Eph. v. 14, is considered the most decisive case.

Ἔγρησαι ὁ καθεύδων,	Awake, O thou that sleepest,
καὶ ἀνάστα ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν	And arise from the dead
καὶ ἐπιφάνησιν σοὶ ὁ Χριστός.	And Christ shall enlighten thee.

It is expressly given by the apostle as a quotation, but without any reference to its author, or origin. To this have been added 1 Tim. iii. 16, and 2 Tim. ii. 11—13. Grotius,

\* Chrysostom (Homil. 3. on Coloss.) mentions a hymn ordinarily sung at the communion, beginning with these words.

and after him many others, have considered the passage in Acts iv. 24—30, as a hymn, rather than a prayer. Augusti calls it the *first Christian psalm*, and gives a poetical version of it. With Michaelis, he supposes it was sung, or rather chanted, according to the custom of the Jews in their synagogues; which the words ἑμοθυμαδὸν ᾄξαν φωνῶν πρὸς τὸν Θεὸν καὶ εἶπον, not only admit, but seem to require; as they show, that it was not a prayer offered by one, but a hymn sung by all with one accord.

The composition and introduction of hymns, would be more easy in the Gentile Churches, especially among the Greeks and Romans, than among their Jewish brethren. The languages they used were polished and well adapted to poetry; they possessed more intelligence and education, and consequently, more men competent to such composition. The Hebrew Christians had probably been accustomed from childhood, to consider inspired psalms alone admissible in the worship of the sanctuary, and cherished a holy, and even a superstitious dread of every thing like innovation, or departure from the good old customs of their fathers. In addition to this, the language used in Palestine at that time, would have been a miserable element in which to clothe the warm effusions of devotional feeling; though perhaps the Hebrew psalms might without much difficulty be altered to approximate so nearly to it as to be intelligible. In accordance with this opinion, we find the apostle James admonishing his Hebrew brethren in these terms, “Is any merry, let him *sing psalms*,” without mentioning hymns or spiritual songs, as Paul repeatedly does when addressing Gentile Christians.\*

In the progress of the Church through successive ages, the

\* James v. 13. We are aware that the “psalms” are not definitely mentioned in the original; the verb ψαλλέτω only being used, which might be applied to a hymn of recent composition as appropriately, as to a psalm of David. Yet as we know that the latter were

character of its psalmody and music will vary with the successive changes of sentiments, manners, and institutions. Each branch of the Church too, distinguished from the rest by its peculiar language or dialect, must have its peculiar psalm-book. Hence it would become indispensable, in the founders of the Church, to prepare a system of psalmody in each of the principal seats, or centres of the Church, as Jerusalem, Antioch, Ephesus or Corinth, Rome, Alexandria. Although the Greek was then the universal or learned language, and circles might be found, and perhaps Churches formed in all these places, in which the Greek books and services might be used; yet where the population spoke a different language, a different psalm-book would be necessary, even more directly necessary, in so far as the public services were concerned, than versions of the Scriptures; for the preachers, if intelligent, might translate the portions or texts they had occasion to use from Sabbath to Sabbath, but the psalms and hymns must be put into the hands of the choir, or singing members of the Church generally. The apostles would naturally devote the requisite attention to this subject, and employ competent persons in the work, where their own engagements and qualifications did not permit them to perform it. Of this part of their labours, however, no record has reached us. The first system of Christian psalmody, like the first Gospel, was most probably prepared at Jerusalem, the mother Church, in what is called by the New Testament and early Christian writers, the Hebrew language—a mixture of Hebrew and Aramæan—which was then the vernacular language of Palestine. The psalms of David may have been already in use in this dialect in the synagogue or temple service of the Jews; and if not, it would be very easy to make the requisite changes of words, and

used, and have no intimation of the use of any other among Hebrew Christians, it seems more natural and just, thus to apply it.

alterations in the forms and declensions. Still greater changes of the same kind, would transfer the psalms into the Chaldaic and Syriac languages. The Arabic, diverging farther from the parent stock, would require more considerable changes, but would still offer all the advantages, in facility of translation, of a sister dialect. The possession of these psalms would materially facilitate the composition of new hymns, more appropriate to the character and circumstances of the Christian dispensation, and would naturally create a consciousness of the want of such an addition to their psalmody, and pave the way for its easier introduction. The original formation of a Christian psalm-book, and its successive changes through the Oriental or Shemitish dialects, would constitute an interesting chapter in the annals of the Church; but as we have no positive information on the subject, we shall not indulge conjecture, but proceed to the history of succeeding ages, and gather up the fragments which the fathers have left, as far as opportunity and means will permit.

The early ecclesiastical writers devoted little attention to this subject, except when it was connected with some public events, or heretical opinions. In the Syrian Church, an occasion of this kind was early presented, and we are accordingly favoured with some interesting notices. There is good reason to believe, that the biblical psalms were introduced and used in the Syrian Church; and the composition of new psalms and hymns was early undertaken. If the sentiments of the distinguished Ephraim are a just specimen of the prevailing taste, we cannot wonder that much attention should have been paid to this subject. The following eulogium on the Book of Psalms, or rather the singing of psalms, is ascribed to Ephraim by a German writer:\* “Psalmody is the repose of the soul, the seal of peace, the bond of

\* Schoene. *Geschichts-forschungen*, &c. Vol. II. p. 290.

friendship, the reconciliation of the divided, the covenant of peace among controvertists. Psalmody calls the angels to our assistance, protects from fear in the night, affords rest in daily labours, protection to children, honour to gray hairs, consolation to the aged, and embellishment to females. Psalmody is heard in the desert, and used in the public services; it instructs the ignorant, and confirms the intelligent; it is the voice of the Church; it illuminates our festivals, and awakens penitential emotions; for it might even draw tears from a stone." The purity of the Syrian Church was invaded at an early date by the poetical fancies and philosophical speculations of the Gnostics. Their doctrines were poetry, ("Gnosis ipsa est poesis,") and their theologians poets; who saw Eons forming and transforming a world of uncreated matter, the stars animated by subordinate deities, ("numina astra,") holy Eons creating good men, and evil ones creating wicked men, and the Holy Ghost as a mother bearing children.\* Their doctrines were made popular, and widely extended by the hymns and odes of Bardesanes, and his son Harmonius, in the latter part of the second century. "Bardesanes," says Ephraim, his orthodox countryman, "composed hymns, and adapted them to music, and prepared (finxit) *psalms*, and introduced metres, and arranged words by measure and quantity. In this way he tendered his poison to the ignorant enveloped in the charms of poetry; for the sick refuse salutary food. He imitated David, that he might be adorned and recommended by similar honours. For this purpose he composed a hundred and fifty psalms." Companies of youth gathered around him, and learned to sing his psalms and accompany them with the

\* *Hahn's Bardesanes, &c.* p. 64. "Quis non claudat aures suas, ne audiat dicentes, Spiritum S. duas filias peperisse.—Jesus tergat os meum! nam iniquo linguam meam, cum illorum arcana retego." *Hymni Ephraimi.* Ibid.

harp. Into these psalms he infused his mystic doctrines, and rendered them palatable to the taste of his countrymen, by the charms of novelty, and the embellishments of oriental style.\* His son Harmonius cultivated the muses with still greater success, and devoted his talents to the promotion of the same heretical cause in which the father was engaged. Having completed his education in Greece, he was enabled to enrich the poetical language of his native country with Grecian measures and imagery; and thus by the sweetness of his melodies, (*τῆ σῶν μέλους ἡδονῆς*), and the richness of his illustrations of the mysterious dogmas of Gnosticism, he surrounded them with no ordinary fascinations. The system took deep hold upon the hearts of the people, and was extensively propagated, and long cherished among them, "so that the Syrian Church was in danger of being overflowed with Gnostic errors through the mighty vehicle of song."

About a century after the age of Bardesanes, Paul of Samosata, Bishop of Antioch, who rejected the divinity and personal dignity of our Saviour, prohibited the use of the psalms sung in honour of Christ, because they were modern and unauthorised compositions,† and introduced at the Easter Festival, hymns to be sung by women, (*ψαλμωδοῦν εἰς ἑαυτὸν*), to his own honour. Mosheim and Augusti doubt the latter statement, although it rests on the same authority as the former, and deem it more probable, that he rejected the modern compositions to replace the Psalms of David. This opinion accords better with the reason assigned by Paul for the change; and he would probably find less difficulty in accommodating or perverting the biblical psalms to his Socinian opinions, than the modern hymns, composed expressly in honour of the Son of God. At a later date we find the council of Ephesus also, though probably for different rea-

\* Hahn. p. 31.

† Euseb. Hist. Eccl.

sons, prohibiting the use in public worship of psalms written by private individuals, (*ιδιωτικὸς ψαλμὸς*;) together with all apochryphal books; and enjoining the use of the canonical books of the Old and New Testament alone. This was probably done on account of the errors and heresies, which had been so extensively propagated in the Churches by these attractive instruments. Chrysostom in the Greek Church, and Ephraim in the Syrian, adopted a different mode of contending with these poetically popular heresies. They attacked the adversary with his own weapons, and turned upon him all the power of poetry and eloquence, augmented by the resistless force of truth.

Two hundred years after the age of Bardesanes, appeared the orthodox Ephraim, "the prophet of the Syrians," whose pious spirit was aroused by the prevalence of heretical doctrines, and the popularity of the Gnostic hymns. "As a champion of Christ, he armed himself and declared war against the host of adversaries, and especially against the errors of Bardesanes and his followers. And when he saw that all were captivated with music and singing, and the youth devoted to profane and dishonourable sports and dances, he instituted a choir of virgins, and taught them to sing odes, or hymns on sublime and spiritual subjects—on the nativity of Christ, his baptism, fasting, sufferings, resurrection, ascension, and the other mysteries of his gracious dispensation: he also composed hymns on the martyrs, on repentance, and the state of the dead; and induced the virgins of the covenant (*virgines sacræ, διακόνισσαι*,\*) to assemble in the Church on all the sacred festivals, and celebrations, or anniversaries of the martyrs, and Lord's days. As a father and choral leader he was always with them, and taught them musical measures, and the laws of modulation until by his efforts he secured the favour and influence of

\* Quae virginitatem Deo voverant. Hahn, &c.



all the citizens (of Edessa,) and confounded and dissipated the ranks of the adversaries."\* He is said to have borrowed the polish of his armour from the skill of his opponents, the melody of his versification from the mellifluous strains of Harmonius. He also adopted the music or tunes of the popular heresy, and accommodated his measures to them; and thus adorned the salutary truths of the Gospel, in all the charms which genius and taste had thrown around the dogmas of error.†

Ephraim wrote, besides many prose works, a large number of hymns and odes on a great variety of subjects. We have before us a considerable collection,‡ under the name of hymns, although some of them are odes and elegies of considerable length. A few select stanzas may not be unacceptable. We shall not attempt, however, to exhibit the rythmical form of the verse, but merely give the sense of each line in order, without metre or poetical language, as is generally done in translating Hebrew poetry, to which the short lines and sententious expressions bear some resemblance. A funeral hymn for a deacon begins thus.

Behold our brother is departed  
 From this abode of woe :  
 The mild light (of heaven) awaits him :  
 Let us pray in his departure,  
 That his guide may be propitious.

He was exemplary in public,  
 And chaste in private life ;  
 Tranquillity and peace  
 He manifested to his brethren :  
 Beatify him in the mansions above.

\* Acta S. Ephraimi in Assemani Bibliotheca Orien. T. 1.

† Theodoret. Eccl. Hist. Lib. IV. Cap. 26.

‡ Hahn's Chrestomathia Syriaca, sive S. Ephraimi Carmina Selecta.

His eyes were ever vigilant  
 In his place before thee,  
 And wept when he prayed,  
 And confessed his sins :  
 May they (his eyes) behold thy grace.

Thou didst count him worthy to be  
 A minister in thy sanctuary,  
 To dispense thy body  
 And thy blood to thy flock :  
 Feed him with thy lambs.

It may be observed as a peculiarity of this class of the Syriac ode, that each stanza concludes with a doxology, or ejaculation, (*ἐφύμνος*), generally of one line, sometimes two or three. A hymn on the mystery of the trinity, is introduced with the following stanzas, of which the whole hymn contains twenty-four.

The standard of truth  
 Is raised in the Scriptures ;  
 The blind have forsaken it,  
 And begun to shoot darts  
 At the Lord of angels.

The standard is this ;  
 There is one only Father,  
 Without division ;  
 And one only Son  
 Beyond comprehension.

This standard is plain,  
 Is exalted in light ;  
 But opposers have shot  
 Their arrows by night,  
 Under cover of darkness.

A large portion of Ephraim's hymns, as might have been

expected from the circumstances under which he wrote, are controversial and doctrinal. He may properly be esteemed the author of a new hymn-book ; which was afterwards generally used in the Syrian Churches by all parties, the Jacobites, Nestorians, &c., without exception. He thus provided a sweet and salutary antidote to the poison, which had been hereditary among them since the days of Bardesanes and Harmonius ; and rendered the celebrations of the victorious martyrs truly splendid, by his appropriate odes.\*

Ephraim was followed by many other celebrated poets, who enriched the hymnology of their Churches, both orthodox and schismatic, with appropriate additions from time to time. Isaac and Balai are mentioned by Gregory Bar Hebræus, as having written many canticles in the measure of David's Psalms (ad Davidicos versiculos;) and the Cuchitæ distinguished by piety and zeal, who published many hymns; and Severus or Seviro, who translated hymns from the Greek, and prefixed to them verses, or mottos from the Psalms of David. Jacob of Edessa, and John of Damascus have also rendered their names illustrious by the composition of sacred poetry ; and Narses Garbono has been denominated by his countrymen, *Kinnoro d'rucho*, the musician of the Holy Ghost, and the poet of Christianity ; and several other names are celebrated in the ecclesiastical annals of Syria, either for the composition of sacred lyrics, or the improvement of Church music. Sabar-Jesus, a patriarch of the ninth century, writes thus : " In the year of the Hegira, 220, I travelled through Aram, (Syria, including Mesopotamia,) and every where found a deficiency of learned clergymen, so that even in the schools of Mar Theodore, Mar Mares, and Mahuz, except a few aged priests, who still remained of the learned numbers of former days, none were competent even to sing the daily psalms. The same state

\* Theodoret. Hist. Eccl. Lib. 4. Cap. 26.

of things also existed in Elam, Mesen, Persia, and Chorosan. I organised the Sabbath psalmody for the whole year. Since, according to the ancient usage, the youth were instructed in the psalms, the pentateuch, the divisions of the psalms, and the prophets, and when they came to the New Testament, were sent away to learn a trade; therefore I, Sabar-Jesus, patriarch, issued a canonical decree, requiring them, after learning the psalms, and the music of the sacred services, to read the Gospels and apostolical writings throughout, afterwards to study the texts from the Old Testament for the sundays and festivals, and then engage in their mechanical pursuits.”

Of the psalmody of the other oriental Churches little is known. Munter found two or three Chaldaic *hymns* in the Corsinian library at Rome, which Augusti has published.\* They consist entirely of encomiums on the Nestorian saints and patriarchs. Their age is not mentioned, but is certainly not early. A specimen is here subjoined in Augusti's Latin translation.

*Hymnus patrum Catholicorum Orientis recitandus in commemoratione Unius.*

Hymnum dicant ecclesiae; ecclesia superior, et ecclesia inferior,  
 Die Commemorationis Patrum Catholicorum Orientalium;  
 Patriarcharum Orthodoxorum, Theologorum refertorum spiritu,  
 Qui pugnarunt et vicerunt, et coronati sunt in agone operum virtutis;  
 Qui pro veritate propugnarunt, et contuderunt omnes haereses,  
 Inflatas a Spiritu erroris; et dogmata perversa confuderunt,  
 Quae disseminavit Malus in ecclesia sancta; et plantarunt ipsi veritatem,

\* *Denkwürdigkeiten*, &c. Vol III p. 400.

In terra intellectuum Christum amantium, et ipsos irrigaverunt,

Aquis viventibus, quas spiritus fluere fecit in eorum mentibus.

Initium ordinis pleni omni beatitudine, *Thaddaeus et Mari*  
ex Septuaginta.

Et *Abrius* indutus omni sanctitate, consanguineus semper  
Virginis.

Et *S. Abraham Capacius*, qui placavit Regem Persarum,  
Et sanavit ejus filium unigenitum ab ipsius morbo diabolico.

The last four lines are a fair specimen of all the rest of the *hymns*, being little more than a catalogue of names with brief panegyrics appended. Of doctrinal sentiment and Scriptural truth, they are as destitute as of poetic merit, and their only value consists in the information they convey respecting the character of the liturgy used on festival occasions, and the testimony they afford to the superstitious veneration for the worthies of former ages. If they bear not the broad seal of papal canonization, they approximate too nearly to be compatible with a Scriptural estimation and improvement of the characters and lives of departed believers.

The Greek psalmody demands attention next. At the time of the organization of the Christian Church, the Greek was the learned language; and was accordingly more or less used in all civilized nations. While the Romans were exercising universal dominion, the Greeks still maintained their superiority in science and literature. The language was extensively used throughout Western Asia and Egypt, though principally by the higher and educated classes. Although not mentioned among the dialects spoken on the day of pentecost, there can be no doubt, that the Gospel was preached in this language almost, if not quite, from the commencement of the dispensation. The first Church or-

ganized at Antioch was Grecian, and others in the Greek provinces of Asia Minor, and the islands of the Levant followed soon after. This organization could not be completed without an adequate number of psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. The Scriptures of the Old Testament they already possessed in a standard translation made nearly three centuries before; but the psalms as exhibited in this translation could not be appropriately adapted to music without considerable transformation. Poetic form and arrangement at least, if not rhythm, would be requisite. It does not appear, however, from the earlier specimens extant that they divided their psalms or hymns into regular metres or stanzas; and probably their music, being more of the character of chants, than of modern tunes, did not require such distribution. The earlier periods of the history, however, afford us little information on the subject. It might have been expected from the literary character of the Greeks, and the number of ecclesiastical writers, whose works have survived the general wreck of ancient literature, that we should be furnished with sufficient materials for a complete history of Grecian psalmody, even from the days of the apostles. But in this expectation the enquirer is painfully disappointed. Several centuries pass in review, and present only here and there occasional references to this portion of the services of the sanctuary. Some have even supposed, that, during the period of frequent persecutions between the days of the apostles and the accession of Constantine, the Christians had discarded music from the public services, for the purpose of avoiding every thing which might attract attention or betray them to their adversaries. But we possess sufficient information to contradict this opinion; and if we had none, we should not esteem it probable; for even in this period they enjoyed many intervals of peace and prosperity, when they could worship their God and Saviour according to his own commands—commands requiring them

to sing praises to his name, and admonish one another with psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs. Besides, the injunctions of their ascended Lord were too important in the view of their unadulterated faith, and the language of sacred praise too dear and congenial to their fervid hearts, to be readily relinquished. Various reasons have been assigned for this deficiency of information; such as, the fragmentary character of the surviving history of that period, the efforts of persecutors to destroy the manuscripts, the comparative paucity of books, and the variety of parties and sects into which the Church was divided in later ages. But the kindness of providential care has preserved as much intelligence on this subject as would be essentially important, and this we ought to receive with grateful contentment.

Philo, a contemporary of the apostles, is said by Nicephorus to have testified, that the primitive Christians after the time of Christ and his apostles sang in their public worship, not only the Psalms of David, and other poems from the Scriptures, but also hymns or odes composed by themselves.\* In this statement we recognise distinctly the psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, mentioned by the apostle. In the apostolical Fathers we find such admonitions as these: "But do you also individually become a choir, that in concord and unanimity, receiving the tone from God in unity, † "ye may sing to the Father by Jesus Christ with one voice." ‡—"That a choir being formed in love, ye may sing to the Father by Christ Jesus." § Origen, in his eighth book

\* Haug's *Alterthümer der Christen*, &c. p. 381.

† *Χρωμα Θεου λαβόντες ἐν ἐνότητι.* The word *χρωμα* indicates that delicate arrangement of the tones and semi-tones, designated in modern technical language by the *Chromatic scale*; called *Chroma*, or Colour, probably on account of being marked in the Grecian stave with colours different from the diatonic scale. It is probably used in this place for refined, elevated melody.

‡ S. Ignatii Epist. ad Ephesios. *Basel. Ed.* p. 23.

§ Ibid. ad. Romanos. p. 66.

against Celsus, declares expressly, that the early Christians not only prayed but sang in their meetings.\* The well-known testimony of Pliny, a distinguished Roman of the second century, Procurator of Bithynia, and himself a persecutor of the Christians, proves, that during the darkest periods of their sufferings they did not neglect the songs of Zion, or hang their harps upon the willows. When cited before the Procurator's inquisitorial court and examined, "they assured him that their only crime, or more properly, error, consisted in assembling on certain appointed days, commonly before day-light, to sing together, or alternately (*vicissim*,) a song to Christ, as God, and to bind themselves by an oath not to commit any iniquity, &c."† "We testify our gratitude to Him," says Justin Martyr, "and glorify Him by songs and hymns of praise." Clement of Alexandria not only mentions vocal but instrumental music at the Sacramental feast. "If any one is able to sing and play on the harp or lyre at the Communion, he is not liable to censure, for he imitates the righteous King of the Hebrews, who was acceptable to God: the guests, however, ought to regard moderation in singing; that only those should sing, who possess good voices, lest the euphony of the psalms should be destroyed." At a later period he declares himself opposed to the effeminate church music, because it enervated the mind and led to licentiousness; a spurious refinement having already found its way into the music of the Church at Alexandria.‡ And well might a pious Father's feelings revolt, if his ears were tormented with any thing like the light fugging and tripping airs, which have so extensively marred the devotions of the sanctuary in modern days.

A hymn always closed the Sacramental services. After the prayer was ended, the priest said, *Tὰ ἅγια τοῖς ἁγίοις,*

\* Haug. p. 381. † Epist. Lib. 10. Ep. 97.

‡ Schoene, *Geschichtsforschungen*. Vol. I.



“Holy things belong to the holy.” The people answered, “One is holy, even our Lord Jesus Christ.” After this he exhorted the people to partake of this sacred mystery, which as Cyril observes, was attended with sacred songs; and they sung together, “Come, taste and see how good is the Lord.”\* Chrysostom, in a Homily on the 144th psalm, remarks, “This psalm deserves special attention, for it contains the words, which are always sung by the Initiated (the members,) saying, all eyes wait upon thee, and thou givest them their meet in due time: for he who has been made a child, and partaker of the spiritual table, with propriety praises the Father.” A curious modification of this custom is described by Tertullian, an African Bishop of the second century. “We do not lie (sit) down at the table, till a prayer is offered to God. Each one eats only what is necessary to a hungry man, and drinks what is moderate for the sober. Each satisfies himself in so far as he is mindful, that God should be glorified in the night. In our conversations we imagine God hears us. When the water for washing the hands, and the lights are brought in, each one is required publicly to sing a hymn to the praise of God, either out of the holy Scriptures, or of his own composition, by which it is known whether he has been temperate in drinking.”† This scene reminds us of the picture of the Church of Corinth, a century before, drawn by the pen of an apostle. We wonder at the rudeness, and sacrilegious irregularity of those Churches, but do we not too often ourselves, carry to the Sacramental board, feelings almost as carnal and unsubdued? How seldom is the Gospel received in the fulness of its heavenly spirit, and the whole heart yielded to its transforming influence. How many bear the name of Christians without any knowledge of Christ, in “the power of his re-

\* Cave's Primitive Christianity. German Ed. p. 283.

† It is uncertain whether Tertullian is here describing the Lord's Supper, or the love feasts, (agapae.)

surrection and the fellowship of his sufferings," and approach his table, and eat, and drink with his children, and go away to dishonour his name and wound his cause by worldliness, intemperance, and other vices !

As a specimen of the ancient sacred poetry, a morning hymn, found by Bishop Usher among the Alexandrian manuscripts, bearing the impress of considerable antiquity, may be here inserted.

ἙΤΜΝΟΣ ἙΩΘΙΝΟΣ.

Καθ' ἐκάστην ἡμέραν εὐλογήσω σε,  
 Καὶ αἰνέσω τὸ ὄνομά σου εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα.  
 Καταξιώσον κύριε καὶ τὴν ἡμέραν ταύτην,  
 Ἐναμαρτήτους φυλαχθῆναι ἡμᾶς.  
 Ἐυλογητὸς εἶ κύριε ὁ θεὸς τῶν πατέρων ἡμῶν,  
 Καὶ αἰνετὸν καὶ δεδοξάσμενον τὸ ὄνομά σου εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας. Ἄμην.  
 Εὐλογητὸς εἶ κύριε, διδάζόν με τὰ δικαίωμάτά σου.  
 Κύριε καταφυγὴ ἐγενήθης ἡμῖν ἐν γενεᾷ καὶ γενεᾷ.  
 Ἐγὼ εἶπα, κύριε ἐλέησόν με,  
 Ἰάσοι τὴν ψυχὴν μου, ὅτι ἡμαρτὸν σοι.  
 Κύριε πρὸς σε κατέφυγα.  
 Δίδαζόν με τοῦ ποιεῖν τὸ θέλημά σου, ὅτι σὺ εἶ ὁ θεός μου.  
 Ὅτι παρὰ σοι πηγὴ ζωῆς.  
 Ἐν τῷ φωτὶ σου ὑψόμεθα φῶς.  
 Παρατρίνον τὸ λῆθός ἐσου τοῖς γινώσκουσίν σε.

A MORNING HYMN.

Every day will I bless thee,  
 And I will praise thy name forever.  
 Grant, O Lord, that this day  
 We may be kept from sin.  
 Blessed art thou, O Lord, God of our fathers,  
 And let thy name be extolled and glorified forever. Amen.  
 Blessed art thou, O Lord, teach me thy judgments.  
 O Lord, thou art our refuge from generation to generation.

I have said, Lord have mercy on me,  
 Recover my soul, for I have sinned against thee.  
 O Lord, I flee unto thee.  
 Teach me to do thy will, for thou art my God.  
 For with thee is the fountain of life.  
 In thy light shall we see light.  
 Extend thy mercy to those that know thee.

It will be perceived at a glance, that, on account of the unmetrical and unpoetical form of this ode, in adapting music, the anthem or the chant alone could be used. "On the metre of the Grecian hymns," says Augusti, "little can be said. In the ancient spiritual songs of Clement, Gregory, Nazianzen, Nemesius, &c., we find much accuracy and regularity, and we may always be satisfied with the Anapaests and Iambics, which were the prevailing measures." In fact so few of the ancient hymns remain, that we have scarcely data for a judgment on their poetical and rhythmical character. In the existing liturgies and collections, no hymns are found earlier than the eighth century, and the works of the fathers furnish only a few detached pieces; with the exception of Gregory Nazianzen, of whose poetry a considerable amount is preserved.

Some interesting testimonies are preserved of the private use of the hymns and sacred songs. Thus Clemens Alex. describes the pious man, as "continually blessing, praising, singing and presenting hymns to God the Lord of all;" being assisted by the Holy Spirit of God, "without whose aid it was impossible to sing, either in good rhyme, tune, metre, or harmony."\* "A good Christian's life is a continued festival, his sacrifices are prayer and praises, reading of the Scriptures before meat, and singing of psalms and hymns at meat."† Hence, in their feasts and banquets,

\* Origen De Orat. § 6. Kings Primitive Church. Pt. 2. p. 7.

† Clemens. Alex. Stromat. Lib. 7.

“when they drank to one another, they sung an hymn, there-in blessing God for his inexpressible gifts towards mankind both as to their bodies and souls.”\* “Let no festival occasion pass,” says Cyprian,† “without celebrating this celestial grace. Let the solemn festival resound with psalms, the precious viands of the soul. If we have a spiritual relish, these pious affections will charm our ears.” Tertullian urges it as a strong objection to the marriage of a female believer with an unbeliever, that they would be unable to sing in sweet accord. “What would her husband sing to her? Or what would she sing to her husband?” But if both were pious, “psalms and hymns would resound between them, and they would mutually excite one another, who shall sing unto God best.”‡ Chrysostom earnestly exhorts the men to teach their wives and children appropriate hymns, to be sung in their various employments, and especially at the table; “because such spiritual songs were an excellent antidote to temptation: for as the devil is no where more busy to draw us into his net, than at the table, tempting us to intemperance or excessive indulgence; so we must diligently prepare ourselves with psalms both before and at table; and again when we rise from the table we must sing spiritual songs to the praise of God with our wives and children.”§ “*Admonish and edify one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.* Behold how carefully the apostle avoids imposing burdensome duties. Since reading may be laborious, and burdensome, he directs you not to the history but to the psalms, by which you may at the same time inspire your heart with serenity, and imperceptibly alleviate the burden of your cares. *With hymns and spiritual songs.* Your children are still learning Satan’s

\* Ibid. Lib. 6.

† Epist. ad Donat. Cave’s Primitive Christianity. Pt. 1. Ch. 9.

‡ Ad Uxor. Lib. 2. quoted by King.

§ Chrysostom in Ps. 41, quoted by Cave.

songs and dances, like cooks, caterers, and dancing masters, but a psalm no one learns. It is even deemed something of which a man should be ashamed, something ludicrous, or ridiculous. Hence the propagation of every evil; for the growth of the plant will be in proportion to the quality of the soil; and the fruit will bear the same character. If planted in a sandy or saline soil, such also will be the fruit, but if in sweet and fertile ground, a similar difference will appear in the production. The doctrines of the Bible are a fountain, which waters the soul. Teach then your children to sing those psalms full of wisdom, enjoining temperance and self-government, and especially avoidance of intercourse with the wicked."\*

The alternate or responsive mode of singing was introduced into the Christian services at an early date, and much earlier in the Oriental, than in the Western Churches. The Syrian Church, it is said, claimed the honour of first adopting this kind of music. It was established in Antioch before the time of Constantine, by Ignatius, a Bishop, who, according to Syrian tradition, was instructed in a vision to imitate the songs of the Seraphim. At a later date, two monks are also said to have rendered their names illustrious by introducing the (*ἕμνους ἀντιφώνους*) responsive hymns into the Church of Antioch.† These statements are reconciled, by supposing that the former refers to the Syriac, the latter to the Greek Church in Antioch. From this region, it gradually spread to the West. Chrysostom found it established in Constantinople when he settled in that capital, and Ambrose introduced it into his Church at Milan; from whence it soon extended generally through the Western Churches. Sometimes the officiating priest or priests, as choristers, sang

\* Ibid. Hom. IX. in Epist. ad Col.—See *Der heilige Chrysostomus*, &c. by Leander Van Ess. (*Darmstadt* 1824.)

† Theodoret's Hist. Eccl. Lib. II. Cap. 19.

the principal part of the hymn, and left the people merely to respond the chorus, doxology, or amen ; sometimes a choir was organized to lead, while the congregation merely uttered the responses : and in other cases, the congregation itself was divided in some way, and taught to sing alternate stanzas. The worship of the Christians described by Pliny, is supposed to have been of this character. “Carmen Christo, quasi Deo, dicere secum invicem.” On any other supposition it is difficult to give a natural and consistent interpretation to the words. Basil the Great, of Cæsarea in Cappadocia, has given in one of his Epistles, a distinct account of this species of music in his description of a nocturnal service. “Our customs and rites are the same, which are practised in all other Churches. During the night, the people assemble at the house of prayer, and with sorrow, anguish, and tears confess their sins to God. At last arising from prayers, they arrange themselves for the psalmody, and now, being divided into two parts they sing alternately to each other, (*ὁρχῆ διανεμηθεντες ἀντι-ἀλλουσιν ἄλληλοις,*) which, at the same time, gives more force to the words, and serves to fix the attention, and prevent wandering of thoughts : then again they enjoin upon one to commence the tune, and the rest accompany him : and thus by this variety of psalmody intermingled with prayer they pass the night ; and at the dawn of the morning all unite with one voice and one heart in a psalm of confession to God, and every one in his own language makes his penitential acknowledgements.” Philo, it is said,\* has mentioned this practice as existing, even in his time, among the Christians, who derived it from the Jews. If this testimony is correct, it must have been introduced in the days of the apostles ; and if it had, from the days of David, and even of Moses, as some maintain, occupied a place in the services of the Jewish sanctuary, and

\* Haug's *Alterthümer der Christen*. p. 379.

was not in itself unlawful, or inappropriate, we cannot deem it improbable that Hebrew Christians, who still retained all the attachment of early impressions and associations, should transfer this favourite mode of sacred praise to the Christian Church. "It was probably such psalms," says Schoene,\* "that the Emperor Theodosius the Great used to sing with his sister, early every morning, to the praise of God in imitation of the customs of monastic life."

The Christian doxology formed a part of the ordinary worship at an early period, although the precise time or manner of its introduction remains unknown. It is not distinctly noticed in the annals of Christian antiquity, until the Arian controversy gave it a degree of prominence, which it had not before possessed. During the progress of this conflict, it became the watchword of sectarianism. According to the testimony of Philostorgius, Flavian of Antioch collected an assembly of monks, and exclaimed, Δόξα πατρι, καὶ υἱῷ, καὶ ἁγίῳ πνεύματι! "Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost!" which constituted the symbol of the orthodox faith. Cassianus informs us, that in Gaul one chorister sings the psalm, and at the close, the whole congregation rose and sang, *Gloria et patri, et filio, et spiritui sancto.* The Arians chanted the varied form, Δόξα πατρι δι' υἱοῦ ἐν ἁγίῳ πνεύματι! "Glory to the Father through the Son in or by the Holy Ghost!" Leontius, a Bishop of Antioch, who endeavoured to conceal his real sentiments, and refused to join either party, although Theodoret places him among the Arians, in chanting the doxology, uttered the words so indistinctly, that it was impossible to ascertain whether he said καὶ, or διὰ, or ἐν, and only made the concluding words, εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων, distinctly audible.† Basil sometimes said, Δόξα πατρι μεθ' υἱῷ καὶ μεθ' ἁγίῳ πνεύματι—"Glory to the Father with the Son, and with the Holy Ghost;" and

\* *Geschichts-forschungen*, Vol. II. p. 193.

† *Theodoreti Hist. Eccl. Lib. II. Cap. 19.*

at others, Δόξα πατρὶ δι' υἱοῦ ἐν ἁγίῳ πνεύματι—"Glory to the Father through the Son by the Holy Ghost." To avoid suspicion, he apologized for this variety of expression by referring to the ancient tradition, which warranted both. When at a later period, the Arians themselves were divided into separate parties, new modifications of the doxology were still used as the distinctive Shibboleth. The Semi-arians sang, μεθ' υἱοῦ, "with the Son;" the Homoiousianists, ἐπὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ, "by the Son;" while the more rigid advocates of Arius added ἦν, ὅτ' οὐκ ἦν, or ἦν ἐνίοτε οὐκ ἦν—"He was, yet there was a time when he was not." The orthodox on the other hand unwilling to be surpassed in accuracy of definition, or distinctness of expression, appended, by authority of a council, the characteristic clause still retained, with some variation, in the liturgy of the Episcopal Church, "sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper, et in secula seculorum, Amen." As he (or it) was in the beginning, is now, and always, and forevermore, Amen. Thus one of the most sacred portions of the worship of the Church militant, in which it was designed to approximate most closely to the services of the Church above, degenerated into the mere watchword of a party, and the signal for strife and controversy.

On special occasions, another, called the great doxology was sung, which consisted of the song of the angels, "Glory to God in the highest, &c.," variously modified. Chrysostom calls it the ὕμνος τῶν ἄνω, or ὕμνος τῶν χερουβίμ—"the hymn of the Cherubim." This doxology was sometimes expanded into a hymn of considerable length. As a specimen, the version of Gregory Nazianzen here deserves a place.

Δόξα θεῷ πατρὶ, καὶ υἱῷ παμ/βασιλῆϊ!

Δόξα πανεύφημῳ πνεύματι παναγίῳ!

Ἡ τριάς εἷς θεός ἐστιν, ὃς ἔκτισε, πλήσσε τὰ πάντα.

Οὐρανὸν οὐρανίων, γαῖαν ἐπιχθονίων,



Πόντον, καὶ ποταμοὺς, καὶ πηγὰς πληῖσεν ἐνύδρων,  
 Πάντα ζωογονῶν πνεύματος ἐξ ἰδίου :  
 "Ὁφρα σοφὸν κτίστην πᾶσα κτίσις ὑμνήσειε,  
 Τοῦ ζῆν, τοῦ τε μένειν, αἴτιον ὄντα μένον.  
 Ἡ λογικὴ δὲ μάλιστα φύσις διὰ πάντος ἄεισι,  
 Ὡς βασιλῆα μέγαν, ὡς ἀγαθὸν πατέρα,  
 Πνεύματι, καὶ ψυχῇ, καὶ γλωσσῇ, καὶ ὕανοίᾳ,  
 Δὸς καὶ ἐμοὶ καθαρῶς δοξολογεῖν δεῖ, πάτερ !

Glory to God most high, Father of all ;  
 And to the Son, the universal King ;  
 And Spirit, all divine, and ever bless'd.  
 The Three one God, who made and fills all things—  
 The heavens with spirits and the earth with men,  
 The deep, the streams, and fountains all with life ;  
 By his own Spirit animating all :  
 That all things made might praise their wise Creator ;  
 The only Father of their life and being :  
 That creatures rational might celebrate  
 The Mighty King, the Father ever good,  
 With soul and spirit, tongue and intellect,  
 Father, may I sincerely sing this praise.

Hilary has compressed the substance of this doxology into  
 a smaller compass.

Gloria tibi Domine !	Glory be to thee, O Lord !
Gloria unigenito !	Glory to thine only Son,
Cum Spiritu Paraclito !	With the Spirit, Comforter,
Nunc per omne seculum.	Now and evermore.

The Grand Te Deum, ascribed to Ambrose, is the most extensive paraphrase of this part of the ecclesiastical service, which has been transmitted to us from ancient times. It commences with the following truly sublime verses.

Te Deum laudamus ! Te Dominum confitemur :  
 Te æternum patrem omnis terra veneratur :  
 Tibi omnes angeli, Tibi cœli et universæ potestates,  
 Tibi Cherubim et Seraphim, inaccessibili voce proclamant,  
 Sanctus ! sanctus ! sanctus ! Dominus Deus Sabaoth !  
 Pleni sunt cœli et terra majestatis gloriæ Tuæ.

Thee, O God, we praise ! Thee, O Lord, we acknowledge !  
 Thee, the eternal Father, the whole earth venerates :  
 To Thee all the angels, to Thee the heavens and universal  
 powers,  
 To Thee Cherubim and Seraphim, in strains inimitable ex-  
 claim,  
 Holy ! holy ! holy ! Lord God of Sabaoth !  
 The heavens and the earth are full of the majesty of thy  
 glory !

This was deemed one of the highest and holiest services of the Church, and Bishops alone at a later period were permitted to use it on Sabbath days and festivals ; except Easter day, when, if no Bishop was present, a Presbyter was allowed to sing it, as it was considered too important a part of the service to be omitted on this solemn occasion. A similar practice prevailed in the Lutheran Church in Saxony in former days, where the general Superintendent, on the three great Festivals introduced the solemnities by singing the Gloria in excelsis Deo.\*

Intimately connected with the doxology, and similar in their use among the primitive Christians, were the *Trisagium* and *Hallelujah*. The words of the Τρισάγιον, or Thrice Holy, were taken from the vision of Isaiah, (ch. 6.) “ Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts ; the whole earth is full of his glory !” Chrysostom mentions its use as an ancient custom in his day. “ The martyrs participate in our choruses

\* Augusti, Denkwürdigkeiten, &c. Vol. V. p. 225.

and mystical songs; for while they were here in the body they took part in the holy mysteries, and sang with Cherubim the song of Thrice Holy." "By which," says Augusti, "he gives us to understand, that the martyrs during their lifetime in company with other Christians sang the Trisagium in the celebration of the mysteries, or Eucharist. But according to his usual practice, as if he had already said too much, he breaks off with the words, "ἴστε οἱ μυηθέντες—" the initiated understand." This part of the service, like the doxology, was made during the ancient controversies a test of orthodoxy, and was from time to time modified into accordance with the sentiments of the worshippers. The council of Chalcedon gave the following version: "Ἄγιος ὁ Θεός, ἅγιος ἰσχυρός, ἅγιος ἀθάνατος, ἐλέησον ἡμᾶς !" "Holy God, holy Mighty One, holy Eternal, have mercy on us!" A Monophysite Bishop of Antioch added the words, ὁ σταυρωθεὶς δι' ἡμᾶς, and an opposer soon after, retaining the appendage, prefixed to it, χριστὲ βασιλεῦ—"Christ, O King, who wast crucified for us." How often, on what occasions, and in what particular connection these words were sung, we are not informed. The *Hallelujah* was principally used during the interval between Easter and Whitsuntide. Augustine informs us that, "Alleluja etiam in aliis diebus cantatur alibi atque alibi, ipsis autem Quinquaginta diebus ubique"—"the Hallelujah was also sung here and there on other days, but during the fifty days every where." The word is thus illustrated by the same distinguished father: "Our praises are a Hallelujah. But what is a Hallelujah? It is a Hebrew word: Hallelujah, praise the Lord: Hallelujah, praise God. Let us sing it, and mutually excite each other to praise God; and thus while we speak with the heart better than with the harp, let us sing Hallelujah, praise to God; and when we have sung, we retire on account of infirmity to refresh our bodies." Some of the celebrated theologians of the middle ages, as Anselm, Durandus, Alcuin,

and others, finding the word but once in the New-Testament, and nowhere in the Latin or Greek authors, and unacquainted with its Hebrew origin, supposed it to be immediately revealed from heaven as a peculiar gift to the New-Testament Church. "From Rev. 19. we know," says Bona, "that this canticum Hallelujah has descended from heaven into the new Church of Christ." Isidore of Spain deemed it too sacred to be translated into any other language. It was not always however deemed too sacred for secular purposes. It was taught and sung as a lullaby to infants in the cradle, used as a watchword in the camp and a war cry on the field of battle, and employed by the Romans in their formula of their judicial oath: "Truly as I hope to hear and to sing the Hallelujah." More appropriate was the use of it made by the inhabitants of Bethlehem, according to Jerome's charming description. "In the village of Christ all is rural, (rusticitas.) Silence reigns throughout, except the singing of psalms. Wherever you turn, the ploughman at his work chants a Hallelujah. The sweating reaper alleviates his toil with psalms; and the keeper of the vineyard, pruning his vines, sings some of David's notes—aliquid Davidicum. These are the hymns—these are what are called the amatory songs used in this region." Even the sailor introduced the sacred word into his boat song, and chanted Hallelujah while tugging at the oar.

Curvorum hinc chorus helciariorum,  
 Responsantibus *Hallelujah* ripis,  
 Ad Christum levat. amnicum celeusma,  
 Sic, sic psallite nauta et viator.\*

The chorus hence of bending oarsmen,  
 The shores re-echoing Hallelujah,  
 To Christ address the mariner's song.  
 Thus sing, O sailor, thus, O traveller!

\* Sidonius Appollinaris, Ep. Lib. II. ep. 10

Among the authorities consulted, we find no notice of any thing like a Psalm-book, or collection of Church poetry, earlier than the council of Laodicea, (An. 370,) at which the following Canon was enacted: "The Canonical Cantors, or choristers alone, who stand on an elevated place in the Church, shall sing the psalms, from the parchments lying before them."\* The precise meaning and object of this Canon are not obvious; and it has accordingly been variously interpreted. Whether the Choristers, in their elevated desks, were required to perform the entire musical service of the Church to the exclusion of the congregation, to avoid the discord often heard in a promiscuous assembly, as is sometimes done by the choirs in modern days; or whether they were merely to select the tunes and lead the music, the congregation accompanying as well as they could, according to the general practice of our own times, seems undecided by the ambiguous expression of the Canon. The latter however is most probable, as the universal practice of the primitive Church made it the duty and the privilege of the whole Church, and not merely of a few select artists, to sing the praises of God their Saviour in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. The choristers were required to occupy a conspicuous station, and sing, ἀπὸ διφθέρας—from the parchments—then the common material of books. Hence the order was equivalent to requiring them to sing the words from the book lying before them, and not from memory, as they would be liable to errors and inaccuracies. But no description of the book or parchment however is furnished, and we are left to form our opinions from conjecture, or content ourselves without an opinion on the subject. An obscure expression of Socrates, an early historian of the Church, has been thought to refer to this subject. The Arians had made great efforts to ren-

\* Pertch's Kirchen Historie Cent. 4. Pt. 2. 102.

der their sentiments popular, by solemn processions, and singing Antiphonal, or responsive hymns, in which their plausible sentiments were garnished in all the charms of poetry and music, (ὡδὰς ἀντιφωνοῦς πρὸς τὴν Ἀρχειάνην δόξαν συντιθέντες.) Chrysostom, then Bishop of Constantinople, sought to counteract their influence, not by legislative enactments, and synodical decrees, but by investing the orthodox services with the same popular attractions. In this work he was assisted by a eunuch of the Imperial Court, ὁ συγκροτῶν τοὺς τότῃ ἕμνοδους—"which words," says Augusti, "if they do not imply the composition of hymns, must be understood of the preparation of a collection." But this interpretation appears to us doubtful. Is not ἕμνοδους used by dialectic variation, or mistake in transcribing, instead of the more common ἕμνωδοὺς;\* and if so, will not the more natural interpretation be—"who organized the singers" into choirs or divisions for the more attractive performance of the sacred antiphonies?

Of the Hymnology of the Latin Church nothing is known earlier than the days of Hilary, and Ambrose, of whose poetical pieces a few authentic specimens remain. "In the mean time," says Hilary, "I have sent you the *morning* and *evening Hymns*, that you may always remember me. But if, on account of your age, you are unable to understand the hymns and the letter, ask your mother, who desires that you should be born to God, and renewed in your moral character, to explain them. That God, who created you, may guard and keep you, here and through eternity, is my prayer, beloved daughter." Other pieces in the modern collections bear the name of this Father; but none bear credentials of genuineness so satisfactory as the Morning Hymn, beginning, *Lucis largitor splendide*, &c., and the *Hymnus*

\* Jones and Schneider omit ἕμνοδὸς entirely: ἕμνωδοὺς Jones translates, "hymn-singing, musical virgins:" Schneider, "Lieder-sänger"—hymn-singer.

*serotinus*; Ad cœli clara, &c. In the department of Church music, no ancient author has acquired so much celebrity as Ambrose; more perhaps by his introduction of the Oriental responses and alternations, than by the composition of original hymns. The occasion and circumstances of that introduction, are thus related by Augustine,\* the personal friend of Ambrose. "Justina, the mother of the Emperor Valentinian, was a zealous Arian, and for a time persecuted Ambrose and his pious flock at Milan, who guarded their holy sanctuary by night, prepared to yield their lives in its defence. To prevent weariness and languor during the long nights of watchfulness, psalms and hymns were sung according to the Oriental mode. (secundum morem Orientalium partium.) It has since been retained; and now (one year after,) is imitated in many, yea, in almost all the Churches in other parts of the world." Throughout the Western Churches, it retained the name of Cantus Ambrosianus, and Officium Ambrosianum. He was also distinguished as a composer, and his hymns became the model of all succeeding poets, and are still used in translations in the Lutheran, if not in other Protestant Churches. He wrote, according to his own account, hymns in praise of the Holy Trinity, to defend the Catholic faith from the attacks of the Arians. His name was appended to many hymns composed in later ages, and some are still found in the Catholic Breviaries, thus unjustly ascribed to him. The genuineness of the grand Te Deum, which was said to have been composed on occasion of the baptism of Augustine, and from which an extract has already been given, has been questioned on the ground that it is not mentioned by Augustine, nor by Possidius, the biographer of Ambrose. A considerable number still extant are known to be his, though probably all have undergone more or less variation in the hands of successive revisers. Of the hymns of Prudentius, the Breviaries have adopted four-

\* Confessionum Liber IX. Cap. 7.

teen, several of which have been highly esteemed; especially a Funeral Hymn, which was long in common use among the Protestants in Germany, both in the original, and in a translation, beginning, "Hört auf mit Trauren und Klagen." In the mass of Latin poetry, used in the Ecclesiastical services of modern times, there is much that is excellent both in matter and manner—*multas veras et pias sententias, eleganti et erudita brevitae comprehensas\**—but deeply imbued with superstition. Herder, overlooking all imperfections and errors, characterizes it in the following glowing language: †

"An effusion of inspiration, lyrical fulness, and lofty jubilant strains pervade the whole in such a degree, that if we did not know the fact, we should strongly feel, that such a combination was not the work of an individual, but the collected treasure of nations and centuries in various climates and different situations. Christianity indeed has a higher object, than to create poets, and its first preachers were by no means endowed with the genius of poetry. Their hymns therefore made no pretensions to the elegance of classical expression, the charms of sensibility, nor indeed to any of the peculiar characteristics of the poetic art; for they were not composed for the diversion of idle hours. But who can deny that they possess power deeply to impress the heart? Those holy hymns, which have lived through centuries, and in every application are still new and entire in their influence—what benefactors have they been to afflicted human nature! They retired with the hermit to his cell—with the oppressed in his grief, in his want, to his grave. While singing them, he forgot his woes; the languid sorrowful spirit caught an impulse that raised it into another world, to the joys of heaven. He returned to the earth invigorated, went forward, suffered, endured, exerted himself in silence

\* Chemnitius—Exam. Concil. Trident. &c.

† Briefen zur Beförderung Humanität.



and overcame. What can secure such a reward, or produce such an effect as these hymns? Or when, sung in the sacred choir, they took deep hold of the dissipated, and enveloped him in thick clouds of amazement—when, under the gloomy dome, accompanied by the deep tones of the bell, and the penetrating notes of the organ, they announced the judgment of God upon the oppressor, or the power of the Judge to the secret criminal—when they united the high and the low, and brought them together upon their knees, and impressed eternity upon their souls—what philosophy, what trifling songs of merriment or folly have produced such effects, or ever can produce them? I would not deny that even the language of the monks in the middle ages had much that was affecting of this kind. I have seen elegies and hymns in the miserable dialect of these monks, that I really knew not how to translate. They possess something so solemn, so devotional, or so gloomy and tenderly pensive, as to penetrate directly to the heart. Scarcely can a man be found whose heart has not been affected by the moving tones of the hymn of Prudentius—*Jam moesta quiesca, &c.*, or penetrated with horror at the death song—*Dies iræ, &c.*, and whom many other hymns of various character, as—*Veni redemptor gentium—Vexilla regis prodeunt—Salvete flores Martyrum—Pange lingua gloriosi, &c.* have not transported each into its peculiar spirit and tone, and subdued with all its ecclesiastical peculiarities into submissive acquiescence. In one we hear only the voice of the suppliant, another admits the accompaniment of the harp; in others the trumpet resounds, or the deeper organ with its thousand tones.”

The ancient Hymnology is different from the modern in being more exclusively devotional. Their composers seem never to have forgotten that God was the grand object of worship, and that their praises, as well as their prayers, could only be appropriate when directly addressed to him. The primitive Church acknowledged no sacred songs but those sung to the praise of God, the glory of his perfections, the

kindness of his condescension, the goodness of his Providential care, the work of Redemption—the glories and works of the Redeemer, the influences of the Holy Spirit, and the faith and hopes of the pious. Their psalmody, in so far as it was composed of the Biblical psalms, corresponded of course substantially with ours; but their hymns were made more directly the expression of their feelings of reverence, gratitude and devotion. Hence the hymn was always deemed the most solemn act of worship. It was not the voice of an individual confessing his sins and praying for pardon, or giving thanks for mercies enjoyed; it was not the language of a minister standing in the holy place, and offering prayers and thanksgivings in the name of the Church; but it was the Church itself uttering in symphonious concert the deep toned expressions of gratitude, or the ardent aspirations of prayer, awakening and expressing the strongest emotions, and the holiest affections of which the human mind is capable. It was to them, what it always ought to be, as an echo from the world of glorified spirits, and a prelibation of their glorious work—a stammering, a beginning of the “new song before the throne,” in which they anticipated spending a blissful eternity. Gregory Nazianzen, one of the earliest and best of the Grecian Hymnologists, expresses his views of the nature of a hymn in these terms :

Ἐπαινος ἔστιν οὖν τι τῶν ἐμῶν φράσαι,  
 Αἶνος δ' ἔπαινος εἰς Θεὸν σεβάσμιος,  
 Ὁ δ' ὕμνος, αἶνος ἐμμελής, ὡς οἶμαι.

It is praise to utter my own emotions,  
 And thanksgiving is reverent praise to God,  
 And the hymn, I consider, melodious thanksgiving.

Chrysostom exhibits the same exalted view of the character of the genuine hymn : οἱ ψαλμοὶ πάντα ἔχουσιν, οἱ δὲ ὕμνοι πάλιν οὐδὲν ἀνθρώπινον. “The psalms embrace all subjects, but the hymns on the contrary none merely human.” How differ-

ent the character of many admired pieces, which have found a place in our modern hymn-books; in which there is nothing but what is *human*, mere addresses to men, to saints, to sinners, exhortations to penitence, faith, or good works, without an intimation adapted to elevate the thoughts to higher and holier objects, to God, to heaven. While the pagan hymns were addressed to their imaginary deities, “we,” says Origen,\* “only sing hymns to him who is called God over all, and his only begotten Son, the Word and God; and we celebrate the praise (*ὑμνοῦμεν*) of God and his only Begotten, even as do the sun, and moon, and stars, and all the heavenly host; for all these being a divine chorus, with the righteous among men, sing praises to God over all, and his only begotten Son.” “And finally,” says another ancient writer,† “who does not know, that the Scriptures represent Christ as God and man; and all the psalms and songs composed by believing brethren from the beginning, celebrate with divine honours (*ὑμνοῦσι θεολογούντες*) Christ the Word of God.” Thus were the primitive hymns enriched with the treasures of doctrinal truth; and the faith and piety of the worshippers, nourished by them into all that vigour and elevation which enabled them to endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ, to stem the torrent of an opposing world, and seal their testimony to the truth of God with their blood and their lives. May the same spirit fill the hearts of future composers, and the same measure of faith and devotion animate the bosoms of all who sing the songs of Zion.

\* *Contra Celsum* Lib. VIII. c. 67.

† Quoted in Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* Lib. V. c. 28. The word *θεολογούντες* as used by the primitive Christians in reference to Christ always means reckoning, or celebrating as Divine, as God. Hence also *Θεολογία* was used for the doctrine of the divinity of Christ; and Gregory Nazianzen was honoured with the title of *ὁ Θεολόγος* for his zeal and fidelity in maintaining this doctrine,

**EXAMINATION OF THE REVIEW OF THE  
AMERICAN EDUCATION SOCIETY.**

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TO THE EDITORS OF THE BIBLICAL REPERTORY ;

MESSRS. EDITORS,—IN the third number of the new series of your Work, dated July, 1829, I have met with a piece, on the General Assembly's Board of Education, and the American Education Society, which has deeply interested my feelings. Whoever the writer of that piece may be, I take the liberty to tender him my most sincere and hearty thanks for the very valuable considerations which he has suggested, at the commencement of his Strictures, respecting the present aspect of the moral and religious world, and the duties and obligations of Christians which result from it. I do most entirely concur with all his remarks, respecting the past failure of the churches to perform their duty in regard to spreading the knowledge of the Gospel abroad ; and in regard to their error in seeking, at any time, to sustain themselves by leaning on the arm of civil power. For one, I rejoice that God has taught them so instructive lessons on this subject ; for we may now venture to hope, in this country at least, that she will not again seek for help from a quarter which will never afford it ; and which, if at any time it condescends to put on the appearance of affording it, exacts more as a return for its favours, than conscience can allow, or the interests of religion permit without injury.

The picture of the religious wants of our country ; the calls for pastoral labours, from thousands of places that are destitute of the word of life ; the interest which Christians are taking in this subject ; the importance of *immediately* furnishing our new settlements with faithful spiritual guides ; the necessity of having these well instructed and disciplined for their great work ; and the imperious duty of all Christians, who are praying the Lord of the harvest to

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